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ABSTRACT

The Vocational Resource Educator (VRE) coordinates the activities of all handicapped students of DeSoto County School District in Mississippi and provides vocational assessment to all handicapped students who enroll in a vocational program. Vocational support personnel assess students' interests, abilities, and special needs so they can successfully complete their vocational program. The assessment program determines what support services are needed in order for the student to have a successful learning experience. The VRE acts as an advocate for the handicapped and serves as a liaison between vocational personnel in implementing a program and providing support services to students. The assessment process is ongoing, beginning with eighth-grade experiences and uses information on file in the student's records. From this information support personnel, vocational teachers, or counselors suggest modifications necessary for students' success. All mandates of the Carl Perkins Act as it relates to the handicapped must be fulfilled. The VRE analyses the information in relation to the courses available in the district and identifies the vocational needs and capabilities of the student. An individualized, work-oriented, vocational program that prepares handicapped students for employment is the result of this analysis and identification procedure. A chart detailing eight responsibilities of the VRE Program of Work is included: (1) identify handicapped students; (2) establish documentation procedures; (3) provide vocational assessment; (4) ensure proper notification of programs; (5) act as a liaison; (6) provide special support services; (7) provide career development activities; and (8) ensure counseling services. Each responsibility statement includes activities, resources, timelines, and outcomes. (NLA)

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TITLE: Vocational Resource Educator: A Support Service Model

ABSTRACT:

The primary role of vocational support personnel is to provide students with an assessment of their interests, abilities, and special needs with respect to completing successfully their vocational education program. The Vocational Resource Educator (VRE) coordinates the activities of all handicapped students of DeSoto County School District and provides vocational assessment to all handicapped students who enroll in a vocational program.

The assessment program is not designed to keep students out of a vocational training program, rather it is designed to assist in making a determination as to what support services are needed in order for the student to improve necessary skills and have a successful learning experience. The goal of the VRE is to see that every support service necessary for the student to be successful is provided. (whatever is needed)

The assessment process should be on-going, beginning with eighth grade experiences and should utilize information that is already on file in the student's records such as interest surveys, counseling sessions, academic grades, standardized achievement test scores of math and reading, learning styles, and an analysis of the curriculum, equipment, and facility adaptations which may be needed. From this information support personnel, vocational teachers, or counselors can suggest modifications or adaptations necessary for student's success in a vocational program.

All mandates of the Carl Perkins Act as it relates to the handicapped, must be fulfilled and documentation must reflect that these assurances have been met. The VRE analyzes the information in relation to the courses available in the district and identifies the unique vocational needs and capabilities of the student which results in an individualized, work oriented vocational program which prepares handicapped students for employment.

CONCLUSION:

Handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs fall into the category of needing special support services in order to complete their program. The VRE acts as an advocate for the handicapped and serves as a liaison between special education, counselors, administration, and other vocational personnel in implementing a vocational program for them and providing support services. Students have become aware that good habits and attitudes add to the enjoyment of the learning environment and life experiences and this has been reflected in a higher degree of successful placement in the work force.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The VRE coordinates special services for the handicapped in the district including career awareness, assessment, guidance and counseling, makes recommendations for appropriate vocational placement, and provides for special support services. Assurances are documented that all mandates of the Carl Perkins Act as it relates to serving the handicapped are documented and kept on file. The VRE acts as an advocate for handicapped students in providing services which they may need and in preparing them for the transition from school to the work place.

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VOCATIONAL RESOURCE EDUCATOR: A SUPPORT SERVICE MODEL

I. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM

Mississippi developed the Vocational Resource Educator for the Handicapped as a means to fulfill the mandates of the Carl Perkins Vocational Act as it relates to serving the handicapped. In 1985 the pilot program was begun in De Soto County using Missouri's VRE model and handbook. The proposal written by DeSoto County has been used as a model for the state since that time and has been presented in workshops and conferences across the state in order to assist other districts in utilizing their funds for serving the handicapped. Today there are 115 Vocational Resource Educators for the Handicapped in Mississippi.

Mississippi is excited over this service which provides support services to the handicapped and also meets the mandates of the law.

II. FUNDING

In the past the VRE has been funded with set aside funds for the handicapped. Although the set asides will be eliminated in the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act, the language of the new legislation seems to be even stronger in mandating that support services and activities are provided for the handicapped which will help them succeed in their chosen vocational program.

III. POLICIES

The State Supervisor for Services and Programs for the Handicapped holds an orientation workshop every year for all new VREs in the state in order to provide them with policies for their program. Area workshops are also held by the state department for all VREs early in the year to keep them up to date on rules and regulations and to issue new materials. Mississippi also holds an annual Summer Vocational Conference where VREs receive and share information related to serving the handicapped.

IV. PROGRAM OF WORK

In 1987, the VREs held a meeting to write guidelines and a program of work. This program of work outlines goals, objectives, and activities of the VRE. All VREs are given a sample program of work which includes the goal of the VRE and eight responsibilities which are necessary to meet the mandates of the law, along with resources, a timeline, and the expected outcome. A sample copy of the Program of Work is attached with the one goal and eight responsibilities explained as follows:

GOAL: To insure the successful completion of a vocational program by the handicapped student.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Identify handicapped students enrolled in a vocational program.

The first year of implementation of the VRE in DeSoto County, handicapped students made up 10% of the total enrollment. This year handicapped students make up 28% of the total enrollment at the vocational center. This is the result of proper identification of the handicapped.

2. Establish documentation procedures.

A file is kept on every handicapped student enrolled in a vocational program which includes the assessment profile, grades, special support services, recommendations, referrals, and other information related to helping the student complete the vocational program.

Files reflect that all mandates of the law have been met.

3. Provide for appropriate vocational assessment of interest, abilities, and special needs of handicapped students with respect to completing successfully the vocational education program.

The VRE coordinates the assessment of all handicapped students of the district and administers a commercial assessment instrument, the Talent Assessment Program, to all handicapped students enrolled in a vocational program. The VRE utilizes an interest survey, a learning style inventory, and any other information already in the student's file which may be helpful in the assessment.

The assessment program is not designed to keep students out of a vocational training program, rather it is designed to assist in making a determination as to what support services are needed in order for the student to improve necessary skills and to have a successful learning experience.

4. Insure that parents and students are notified of vocational offerings in the district at least one year before the student enters the grade level in which vocational programs are generally first available in the district, but in no case later than the beginning of the ninth grade.

Career information is provided to assist handicapped students in extablishing vocational goals and in developing a realistic vocational plan. During the 8th grade, students and their parents receive information concerning the vocational opportunities available in the district. Follow up information is provided each year until the students enroll in vocational programs at the center.

Samples of some of the flyers given to 8th grade students are attached.

5. Act as a liaison among vocational instructors, counselors, special education teachers, administrators,and other agency personnel to insure success of the student.

In order to have an effective program, the VRE must develop a communications network with students, parents, resource teachers, administration, counselors, and the community; must utilize the craft committee, present inservice programs and workshops to vocational teachers and personnel and become a public relations manager in order to be an advocate for the handicapped students.

6. Provide for special support services by appropriate certified personnel to insure the success of handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs.

It is the duty of the VRE to see that every support service necessary for the handicapped student to be successful in the vocational program is provided (whatever is needed.) This does not mean that the VRE must personally do it all, but must see that it is done.

Special support services might include modification of curriculum, modification of instruction, changes in methods, changes in equipment, and modification of facilities.

7. Provide career development activities to all handicapped students in the district no later than the beginning of the ninth grade level.

Career information is given to eighth grade handicapped students in order to get them interested in vocational education and thinking about their career goals. A Career Awareness Packet has been developed to be used by VREs in cooperation with guidance counselors and resource teachers in middle schools and high schools.

8. Insure that counseling services are provided to facilitate the transition from school to post-school employment and career opportunities.

Students are aware that the VRE is an advocate for them and available to assist them with special support. Guidance and couinseling is provided to assist the handicapped student in making career plans and solving any problems in the transition from school to the world of work.

V. SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM

This program has been successful in DeSoto County as shown by increased enrollment and the addition of new VRE programs around the state. DeSoto County was sold on the VRE program and committed to

serving the handicapped. State sponsored meetings, conferences, and sharing sessions have been provided to keep the VRE abreast of responsibilities, activities, and guidelines. Vocational teachers have been willing to accept VRE suggestions, and local schools have been cooperative in scheduling assessment. There has been a cooperative effort on the part of all concerned to see that mandates are met, and that documentation is on file.

This cooperative effort has been a prime factor in insurring the success of the VRE, providing special support services, meeting the mandates of the law, and fulfilling the responsibilities of the district to the handicapped students.

VI. CONCLUSION

The VRE is an advocate for handicapped students and serves as a liaison between special education, counselors, administration, and other vocational personnel in providing special support services. These students have developed a higher degree of self esteem and have become aware that good habits and attitudes add to the enjoyment of the learning environment and life experiences. This has been reflected in a higher degree of successful placement of handicapped students in the work force.

PROGRAM OF WORK

VOCATIONAL RESOURCE EDUCATOR AND SPECIAL VOCATIONAL COUNSELOR

FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Check one: Counselor____ VRE____

Signature:

VRE, Special Voc. Counselor

Administrator

From: To:

Date

School

GOAL: To insure the successful completion of a vocational program by the handicapped student.

I. RESPONSIBILITY: Identify handicapped students enrolled in a vocational program.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
1. Secondary: (Example)		When making application for a vocational class	
Go to vocational class and poll the students	Students	Immediately after enrollment in a vocational program	All handicapped students enrolled in a vocational program are properly identified
Ask counselor from feeder school for a list of handicapped students		Beginning of each enrollment period.	
Ask resource teacher for a list of handicapped students	Resource Teacher		Proper assistance can be provided which will enable the student to succeed
Ask Vocational Counselor for a list of handicapped students, and etc.	Vocational Counselor		
2. Post-Secondary: (Example)			
Distribute questionaire to all vocational/technical students	Counselor's Questionaire		
Examine college admission form for indication of handicapping condition	Admission Form		
Check with secondary school for SPED record	High School Record		
Ask the student if he/she has ever been classified as SPED	Vocational Student		

II. RESPONSIBILITY: Establish documentation procedures.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
Prepare an individual file for every handicapped student enrolled in a vocational skills training program. Included in the file are: TAP summary report Student Interview Parent Interview Teacher Interview Contacts with Student Student Progress Reports Special Support Services, if needed	Students	When students enroll in a vocational program	Assurance that documentation of assessment, evaluation, career awareness, progress in the program, and recommended assistance is on file
Develop files documenting accomplishment of the goals and objectives stated in the contract agreement for serving the handicapped.	Filing Cabinet and Files	Immediately and ongoing	Tangible evidence that the Carl Perkins requirements have been met
Develop a file documenting the accomplishments of the eight responsibilities listed in this program of work			Documentation that the responsibilities in this program of work are being met

III. RESPONSIBILITY: Provide for appropriate vocational assessment of interest, abilities, and special needs of handicapped students with respect to completing successfully the vocational education program.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
Administer an interest survey to all handicapped students interested in vocational education	Interest survey, VRE, Vocational Counselor	When student expresses an interest or a desire for vocational education	Student's interests will be identified
Administer the TAP or an appropriate vocational assessment and/or evaluation to each handicapped student who enrolls in a vocational program	TAP, Software Vocational Assessment, Vocational Preparation/Evaluation Teacher, Students, Parents, SPED Teachers	When the student enrolls in a vocational program, or as soon as possible	Student's abilities, and special needs will be identified Special support services can be provided A realistic IEVP can be developed, if needed

IV. RESPONSIBILITY: Insure that parents and students are notified of vocational offerings in the district at least one year before the student enters the grade level in which vocational programs are generally first available in the district, but in no case later than the beginning of the ninth grade.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
Send a letter to parents and students notifying them of all vocational programs along with a description and requirements for entrance into the programs. Send news releases to every local newspaper with information on vocational special services Send a letter to parents explaining the TAP. Give out a brochure outlining special services provided by the VRE.	Letters, Conferences, Brochure, Newspaper, Vocational Handbook, Student Conferences and guidance sessions, Vocational Counselors	During the student's eighth grade year and all new handicapped students 15 years of age and older No later than the be beginning of the ninth grade	Parents and students will be aware of all vocational programs offered in the district and the requirements for entrance Students will be able to make a meaningful vocational choice Parents and students will be aware of the vocational assessment program.

RESPONSIBILITY: Act as liaison among vocational instructors, counselors, special education teachers, administrators, and other agency personnel to insure success of the student.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
Participate in IEP meetings when requested Request that staff development reflects inservice relating to special needs of the handicapped Provide assistance to vocational instructors, and to function as a liaison with feeder schools Assist in appropriate vocational placement Communicate with SPED teachers for resource services Cooperate with vocational and guidance counselors at each feeder school to insure that handicapped students receive the guidance and counseling services necessary to insure their success Insure contact among school personnel, parent, and student regarding student progress in the vocational program	VRE, other designated personnel Resource materials, Special Support Services, Special Equipment, Special academic assistance, Individual conferences, Referral Forms, Grade Sheets,	Upon enrollment in a vocational program and ongoing	Effective cooperation between vocational and special education Teachers will become more aware of the special needs of handicapped students Students will be appropriately placed in a vocational program Students will receive necessary assistance to insure success in a vocational program Students will successfully complete a vocational program

VI. RESPONSIBILITY: Provide for special support services by appropriate certified personnel to insure the success of handicapped students enrolled in vocational programs, such as academic assistance in the area of reading, math, and or language.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
Contact appropriate school personnel to provide for designated special needs such as: special guidance and counseling services, tutorial services, furriculum adaptation, special equipment, modification of equipment, academic assistance, individual guidance and counseling, and any other service that might be necessary to enable the student to succeed in a vocational program	VRE, Vocational Counselor, Special Education Teacher, Academic Counselor from feeder schools, or other designated or interested personnel	Upon enrollment in a vocational program and ongoing	Appropriate school personnel will be aware of student's special needs Special support services will be provided by appropriate certified personnel Student will successfully complete a vocational program

VII. RESPONSIBILITY: Provide career development activities to all handicapped students in the district no later than the beginning of the ninth grade level.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
Provide an opportunity for career exploration and information Provide group career awareness sessions Recommend visits to business, industry, and the Vo-Tech Center	Special Education Teacher, Vocational Counselor, Academic Counselor, Newspaper Resource People	During the eighth grade	Student is informed of career opportunities Student will be able to make a meaningful vocational choice

VIII. RESPONSIBILITY: Insure that counseling services are provided to facilitate the transition from school to post-school employment and career opportunities.

ACTIVITY	RESOURCE	TIMELINE	OUTCOME
Insure that student receives employability skills training Provide student with information, guidance, and counseling regarding further training, such as: Community College Trade School Industrial Training Armed Service Opportunities	School Curriculum Community College, Employment Office, Vocational Counselor, Skills Instructor, Service Recruitment Officer	During final stages of student's training program Anytime that may be necessary for an individual student and ongoing	Student acquires skills necessary for job procurement Student will be aware of advance vocational training opportunities Student will be successfully employed

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DeSoto County Vo-Tech Center
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Southaven, MS 38671

8TH GRADE DATA SHEET

NAME_____Age____Birthday_____Sex_____

PARENTS OR GUARDIAN_____

ADDRESS_____Phone_____

City_____State_____ Zip_____

Answer yes or no to the following questions:

1. Do you plan to work when you finish school?_____
2. Do you plan to go to college?_____
3. Are you interested in Vocational Classes?_____
4. Do you want to attend Vo-Tech?_____

List Vocational Classes you are interested in:

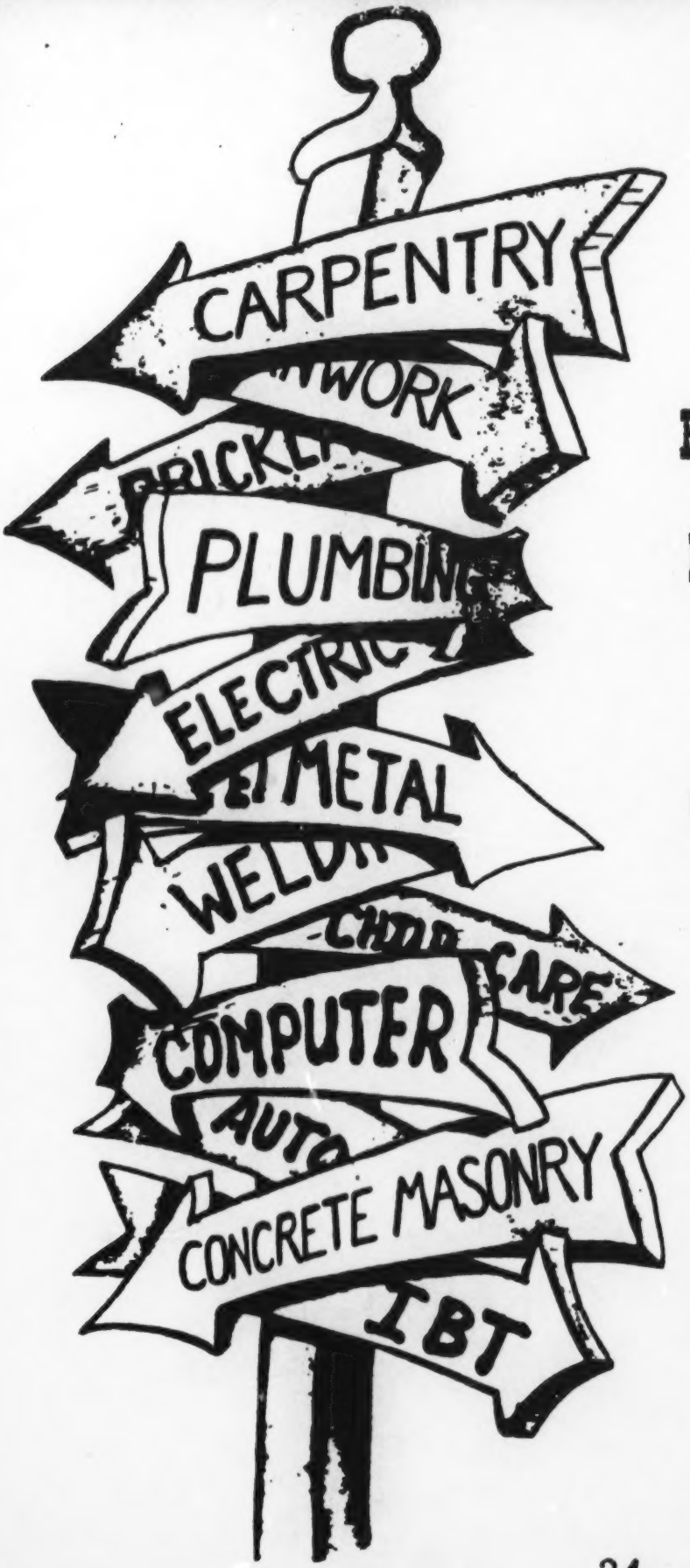
Career Information Provided:

__ Vocational Courses offered in high school
__ Vocational Courses offered at Vo-Tech
__ Description of Vo-Tech Classes
__ Information on the Community College
__ Getting a job after high school
__ Brochure on Assessment Program at Vo-Tech to take home to parents
__ Flyer on Vo-Tech Courses to take home to parents

Follow Up:

_____

_____



VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT POINTS STUDENTS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!

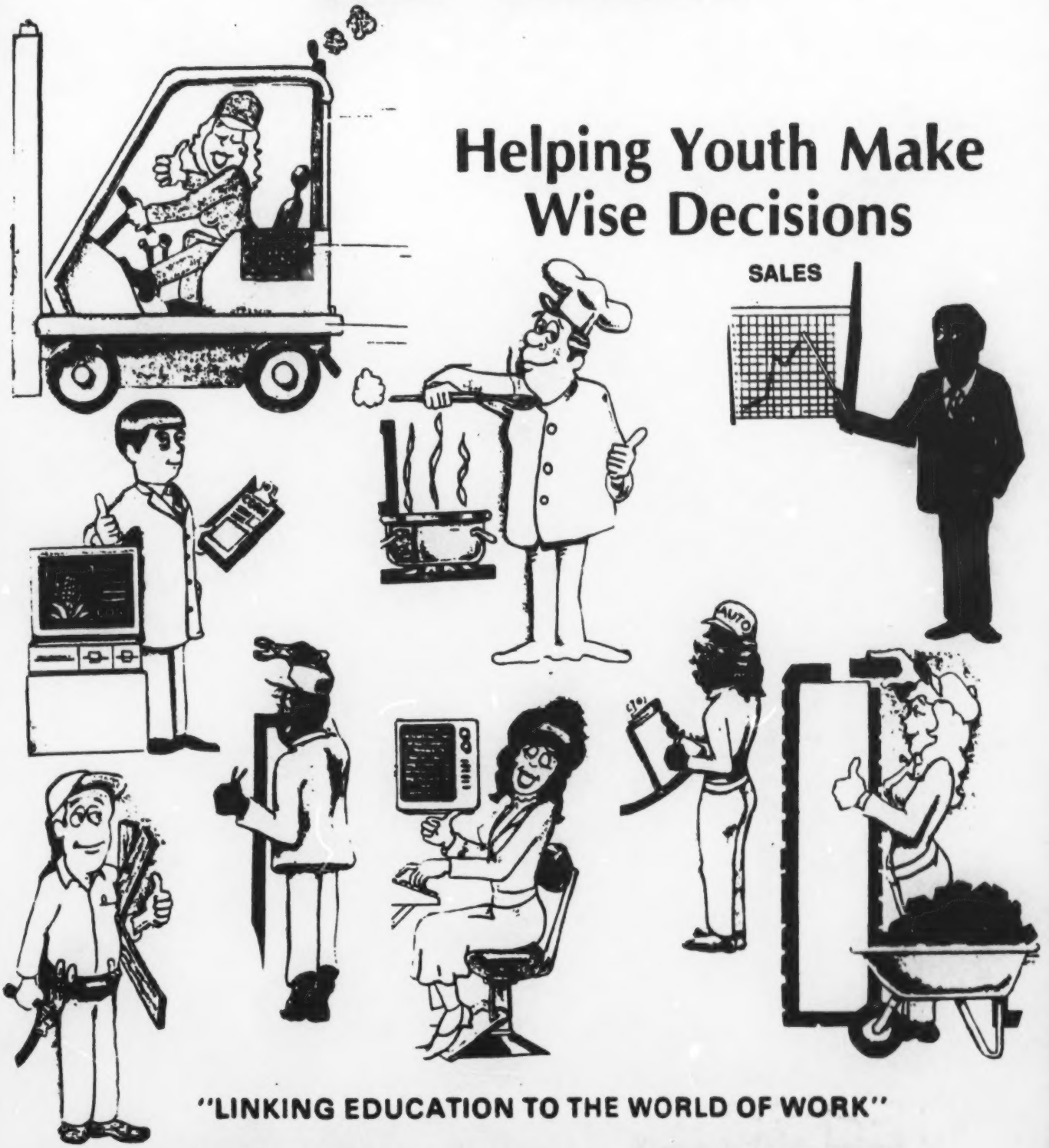
THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO GO!

AT DESOTO COUNTY VO-TECH CENTER

Charlotte Stephens
Vocational Resource Educator

* Pictures taken from ADA Poster.

VO-TECH



Helping Youth Make Wise Decisions

"LINKING EDUCATION TO THE WORLD OF WORK"

DESOTO COUNTY VOCATIONAL - TECHNICAL CENTER

Charlotte Stephens
Vocational Resource Educator